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## Joseph Pitty Couthouy — A Bibliography and Catalogue of His Species

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During the year 1808, when the masts and spars of trim merchant vessels cast long shadows over the weatherbeaten wharves of Boston, there was born to Captain Couthouy, ship-master of that city, on the sixth of January, a son, Joseph Pitty. Young Couthouy was educated at the already venerable Boston Latin School. Quite naturally he chose a life at sea and when still a young man, succeeded to the command of a vessel. Married to Mary G. Wild of his native city on March 9, 1832, he left at the time of his death in 1864, three daughters, his only son having died some years before.

A bent for natural history led Couthouy at the age of twenty-eight to become a member of the Boston Society of Natural History, and his first paper was read before that society the following year. Like his contemporaries, J.W. Mighels and C.B. Adams, he turned to the investigation of fish entrails, especially those of the haddock, as a means of discovering new and rare shells. His efforts were varied and productive and some of his finds so rare that only in recent years have these species been rediscovered.

When the U. S. Exploring Expedition was organized in 1837, Couthouy applied in person to President Andrew Jackson for a position with the scientific staff. The President said he could not seriously entertain the application as the list of officers was already complete. To which the irrepressible young sailor replied, "Well, General, I'll be hanged if I don't go, if I have to

go before the mast." This pleased "Old Hickory," who told him, "Go back to Boston and I will see if anything can be done for you." There, a few days after his return, he received his commission as Conchologist of the Scientific Corps.<sup>1</sup>

The expedition left Norfolk, Virginia, August 18, 1838. During the course of the voyage Couthouy made many valuable drawings and notes on the mollusca, some of which are preserved in the report of the Expedition. When the expedition left Samoa, his health declined. Wilkes demanded that Couthouy turn over his notes and drawings to his commander, for Wilkes was preparing a narrative of the voyage. Couthouy, however, refused, claiming that his subsequent work would be crippled without them. Wilkes thereupon suspended him and ordered him home "for disobedience of orders."

Upon returning home Couthouy set about classifying those parts of the collections which had already been sent back to Washington; but unfortunately they had been turned over to the newly organized National Institution where a worthy curate, who knew nothing of natural science, was instructed to unpack them. Couthouy had numbered his notes and had placed correspondingly numbered tin tags in each of the jars of specimens preserved in alcohol. The reverend gentleman, upon receiving the material, noting that the tags were slightly discoloring the alcohol, carefully removed them and placed them in a bottle by themselves, failing to put any other means of identification in the jars. The result of this unfortunate error may well be imagined. Couthouy found that the shells to which his notes referred could not be sorted out and that some were even missing. Nevertheless, Couthouy struggled with the material until the return of the expedition, at which time a forty-four per cent decrease in the already low salaries of the naturalists was put into effect. This forced Couthouy to resign and his papers and collections were placed in the hands of Dr. A. A. Gould of Boston, who completed the report.

After quitting the expedition, Couthouy again set sail, this time as captain of a merchant vessel, visiting Europe, South America, and islands of the South Pacific. While in Spain, at the time of the Carlist Wars, he was several times under the

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<sup>1</sup> Dall, W. H., 1888, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 4, p. 109.



*Joseph P. Couthouy.*

1808 - 1864

Plate 8. Copied from Dall 1888, p. 108

Photographed by F. P. Orchard

suspicion of government officials who could not believe he was a foreigner, as his Spanish was so pure and unaccented. He also spoke French, Portuguese and Italian with fluency, and even knew more than one of the unwritten languages of the South Seas. In 1854, Captain Couthouy commanded an expedition to the Bay of Cumaná where he spent three years in search of treasure which had been lost on the Spanish ship *San Pedro* nearly half a century before. On the return voyage, his ship was lost off Cape Cod and he and his crew were rescued only with great difficulty.

During the War between the States, he volunteered his services to the United States Navy and on August 26, 1861, was appointed acting volunteer lieutenant. A few days later, he was placed in command of the barque *King Fisher*. In December, he was transferred to the command of the *S. S. Columbia*, which was engaged in blockading the Confederacy. His vessel was wrecked in a storm at Masonboro Inlet, North Carolina, and he was sent as a prisoner of war to Salisbury, North Carolina. He remained here for three months before being exchanged. He next appears in charge of the monitor *Osage* of the Mississippi River Squadron, which was under the command of Admiral Porter. He was subsequently transferred to the *S. S. Chillicothe* of the same squadron and was ordered up the Red River. On the third of April, while off Grand Ecore, Louisiana, directing his vessel from the turret, a Confederate soldier shot him from ambush and he died on the following day.

Couthouy described as new one genus and thirty-eight species of recent mollusks, and one brachiopod. Of the thirty-eight mollusks, at least sixteen are now acknowledged to be synonyms. This resulted chiefly from the scarcity of European conchological works in this country at that time, a fact which accounts for many of the synonyms created by other early American naturalists as well. Couthouy's work is clear and his species are, in general, well defined. His papers are illustrated by carefully prepared engravings by Dr. A. A. Gould.

As previously mentioned, Couthouy did not publish the results of his observations with the United States Exploring Expedition. His manuscripts were turned over to Dr. A. A. Gould, who prepared the report. Dr. Gould attributed to Couthouy a number of the names which appear in his manuscript, how-

ever, according to the International Rules of Nomenclature, Gould, not Couthouy, receives the credit for naming these species. However, these names have been listed below without a reference to make the record as complete as possible, particularly as these names are occasionally referred to under the authorship of Couthouy. Much credit should be given to Couthouy for the many field notes that he had included with his material which Gould published in his report. All of these names appear in volume 12, Mollusks of the United States Exploring Expedition, 1852, and reference is given in this publication to these species that Gould had previously published in the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History. These names also appeared in Gould's collation of his own descriptions in "Otia Conchologica," Boston, 1862.

Type specimens of most of Couthouy's species were deposited in the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History. Couthouy had a private collection, the location of which is unknown, if indeed it is still in existence. Other of his types were deposited in the collections of Drs. A. A. Gould and J. C. Jay and also in the cabinet of the New York Lyceum of Natural History. The Museum of Comparative Zoölogy is in possession of a few of his types as well as those originally contained in the Boston Society of Natural History.

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*Bibliography of J. P. Couthouy's works on recent Mollusks:*  
May 1837, Description of a new species of the Genus Marginella (Lam.), with some observations upon the same. Boston Journal of Natural History, **1**, No. 4, pp. 440-443, pl. 9, fig. 1, 2.

- Feb. 1838, Descriptions of new species of Mollusca and Shells and remarks on several Polypi found in Massachusetts Bay. Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, No. 1, pp. 53-111, pl. 1-3.
- 1838, same title: extracted from the Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, No. 1, Feb. 1838, pp. 53-111; repaged 1-59, no change in plates.
- July 1838, same title: American Journal of Science and Arts O.S., **34**, pp. 216-219. (This article, which is really a review, contains all of the species described in the Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, No. 1, Feb. 1838, pp. 53-111, but the descriptions have been reduced to mere skeletons and translated into Latin. The author's remarks and the plates have been omitted.)
- Feb. 1839, Monograph on the Family Osteodesmacea of Deshayes, with remarks on two species of Patelloidea, and descriptions of new species of Marine Shells, a species of Anculotus, and one of Eolis. Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, No. 2, pp. 129-189, pl. 4-5.
- 1839, same title: extracted from the Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, pp. 129-189, repaged 60-120, no change in plates.
- July 1839, American Journal Science and Arts, O.S., **36**, pp. 379-390. (In the "Miscellanies" Dr. A. A. Gould, recording secretary of the Boston Society of Natural History, has made a report on the papers and species described in the Boston Journal of Natural History, **2**, Feb. 1839, pp. 129-189.)

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*A List of Recent Mollusks described by J. P. Couthouy with their original references and type localities.*

The initials BJNH refer to the Boston Journal of Natural History and MCZ to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy.

**antarctica** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Siphonaria**

**antarcticus** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Sigaretus**

**asperrimus** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Chiton**

**attenuatus** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Eolis**

**bicarinata**, **Pleurotoma**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 104, pl. 1, fig. 11 (from maw of a haddock taken 3 miles east of Nahant, Mass.).

**bostoniensis**, **Eolis**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 67, pl. 1, fig. 1 (tide water of Charles River, Mass.).

**brasiliense** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Osteodesma**

**buccinoides**, **Cancellaria**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 105, pl. 3, fig. 3 (Massachusetts Bay). [Cotype MCZ 154829.]

**caelatum** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Cerithium**

**candida**, **Patella**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 86, pl. 3, fig. 17 (from stomach of a cod taken off Barnstable, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154824.]

- castaneus** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Chiton**
- cinereus**, **Turbo**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 99, pl. 3, fig. 9 (from stomachs of fish taken off Lynn, Mass., and dead on Phillips Beach, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154828.]
- Cochlodesma**: new genus, 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 170. Genotype, *Anatina leana* Conrad.
- conradi**, **Thracia**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 153, pl. 4, fig. 2 (Chelsea Beach, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 147651.]
- consolidata**, **Natica**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 89, pl. 3, fig. 14 (from stomachs of fish taken near Nahant, and off Cohasset, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154831.]
- costellatus**, **Trichotropis**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 108, pl. 3, fig. 2 (from entrails of fish taken between Cape Ann and Cape Cod, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154827.]
- cyanella** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Eolis**
- cucullata** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Tritonia**
- decussata**, **Pleurotoma**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 183, pl. 4, fig. 8 (from haddock caught off Barnstable, Cape Cod in about 15 fathoms).
- dentatus**, **Anculotus**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 185, pl. 4, fig. 7 (rapids, about one mile above the little falls of the Potomac River, Virginia). [Cotypes MCZ 154626.]
- diaphana** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Bulla**
- diversa**, **Eolis**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 187, pl. 4, fig. 14 [not figure 9]. (Chelsea Beach, Massachusetts Bay, among roots of *Laminaria saccharina*.)
- eightsii** 'Couthouy' Jay, **Nucula**, 1839, Catalogue of the Shells Contained in the Collection of John C. Jay, Third Edition, New York, p. 113, pl. 1, fig. 12-13. (New South Shetland [South Shetland Islands, Antarctic Ocean] ). The description of this species was read by Couthouy before the Lyceum of Natural History, New York, but was never published. Credit, therefore, goes to Jay who first described and figured it.
- emersonii**, **Chiton**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 83, pl. 3, fig. 10 (from stomachs of cod taken off Cape Ann, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154836.]
- erosa**, **Turritella**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 103, pl. 3, fig. 1 (in maws of fish caught in Massachusetts Bay). [Cotypes MCZ 154832.]
- exigua**, **Jaminea**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 92, pl. 1, fig. 7 (near ferry landing at Chelsea, Mass.).
- fulminatus**, **Chiton**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 80, pl. 3, fig. 19 (from stomachs of fishes taken near Cohasset rocks and Cape Ann, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 154830.]
- glabra**, **Oxinoe** (?): 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 90, pl. 3, fig. 16 (from stomachs of fish caught off Barnstable, Mass.).
- gouldii**, **Bulla**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 181, pl. 4, fig. 6 (from stomachs of cod and haddock taken off Cohasset rocks in about 12 fathoms, and at eastern end of Nahant Beach, Mass.).
- gymnota**, **Eolis**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 69, pl. 1, fig. 3 (tide waters of Charles River, Mass.).
- harpularius**, **Fusus**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 106, pl. 1, fig. 10 (from cod taken off Phillips Point, Lynn, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 156334.]
- hiemalis**, **Bulla**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 180, pl. 4, fig. 5 (from codfish taken off Provincetown, Mass., in about 30 fathoms). [Cotype MCZ 156326.]
- incarnatus**, **Turbo**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 98, pl. 3, fig. 13 (from stomachs of fish taken between Marblehead and Nahant, alive on shore at Phillips Beach, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154835.]
- indolens** 'Couthouy' Gould, **Peronia**
- lacunculata** 'Couthouy' Gould **Bursatella**

- lateralis* 'Couthouy' Gould **Siphonaria**  
*lineolata*, **Bulla**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, pl. 3, fig. 15 [figure only]; *ibid.*, 1839, p. 179 (from stomach of a haddock taken in about 25 fathoms off Race Point, Cape Cod, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 156327].
- liratus* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Fusus**  
*luteola* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Doris**  
*lyrata* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Helix**  
*marginata* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Peronia**  
*megalocyathus* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Octopus**  
*myalis*, **Nucula**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 62, pl. 3, fig. 7 (from stomachs of cod taken in Massachusetts Bay). [Cotype MCZ 154834.]  
*navicularis*, **Nucula**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 178, pl. 4, fig. 4 (from stomach of cod caught off Plymouth, Mass.). [Cotype MCZ 154833.]  
*novangli*, **Scalaria**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 96, pl. 3, fig. 5 (from stomach of cod taken off Cape Ann, Mass.).  
*obscurus*, **Turbo**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 100, pl. 3, fig. 12 (from stomachs of fish taken between Marblehead and Nahant, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 154825.]  
*pleurotomarius*, **Fusus**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 107, pl. 1, fig. 9 (from stomach of cod caught near Lynn, Mass.).  
*plumulata* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Doris**  
*praetenuis* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Sigaretus**  
*pubescens*, **Cardium**: 1838, **2**, p. 61, pl. 3, fig. 6 (near Egg Rock, off Lynn, Mass.).  
*punicus* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Chiton**  
*reynoldsii*, **Tritonia**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 74, pl. 2, figs. 1, 2, 3, 4 (tide water of Charles River, Mass., at the Bathing House, Cragie's [Craigie's] Bridge).  
*rhododendron* 'Couthouy' Jay, **Conus**: 1839, catalogue of the Shells contained in the collection of John C. Jay. Third Edition, New York, p. 121, pl. 7, fig. 2-3 (Seas of Australasia) [see note under *eightsii*] [Cotypes MCZ 88299].  
*sagrinatus*, **Chiton**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 82 [not figured] (from stomachs of fishes taken between Cohasset rocks and Cape Ann, Mass.).  
*salmonacea*, **Eolis**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 68, pl. 1, fig. 2 (tide water of Charles River, Mass.).  
*saxatilis* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Helix**  
*septentrionalis*, **Terebratula**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 65, pl. 3, fig. 18 (from stomach of a haddock taken off Nahant, Mass.). [Brachiopod.]  
*similis*, **Thracia**: 1839, BJNH, **2**, p. 150, pl. 4, fig. 2 (coast of Brazil not far from Rio de Janeiro).  
*sordida*, **Tellina**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 59, pl. 3, fig. 11 (about 2 miles outside of Boston Lighthouse, Boston, Mass.).  
*storeria*, **Marginella**: 1837, BJNH, **1**, p. 440, pl. 9, figs. 1, 2 (southern coasts of the Gulf of Mexico). [Cotype MCZ 161232.]  
*striatulus*, **Pyramis**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 101, pl. 1, fig. 6 (from the stomachs of fish taken off Cape Ann, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 125507.]  
*subulata*, **Scalaria**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 93, pl. 3, fig. 4 (Massachusetts Bay, vicinity of Cape Ann).  
*sulculata* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Nucula**  
*tenuisulcata*, **Nucula**: 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 64, pl. 3, fig. 8 (from stomachs of fish taken off Phillips Beach, Mass.). [Cotypes MCZ 152488.]  
*triticea*, **Bulla**, 1838, BJNH, **2**, p. 88, pl. 1, fig. 8 (Massachusetts Bay).  
*viridulus* 'Couthouy' Gould, **Chiton**